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# Panama General Accused in Killing

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PANAMA, June 18— In an effort to confront the military Government, Panamanian opposition leaders today supported a formal accusation that the army chief here ordered the beheading of an opposition leader last year.

The accusation was presented today by the family of the slain leader, Dr. Hugo Spadafora, whose decapitated body was found a day after he was seen being detained by Panamanian soldiers last September.

The opposition Christian Democratic Party and Authentic Panamanian Party supported a demonstration of about 350 people who backed the family's demand that the Attorney General investigate whether the army commander, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, ordered the killing.

Dr. Spadafora's slaying has come to play a major part in opposition demands for an end to military control of the Government. It is widely believed here that the army summarily dismissed the last President, Nicolás Ardo Barletta, because he tried to investigate the killing last year.

## Accusations in U.S.

Several United States officials in Washington have said recently that the army killed Dr. Spadafora, possibly on the direct orders of General Noriega. General Noriega has repeatedly denied the charges.

Although there is circumstantial evidence of army involvement in the killing, the de facto military Government appears not to have investigated Dr. Spadafora's killing thoroughly. The army is refusing to appoint a special investigating commission in the case.

"They can't fully investigate this case because they know the truth will come out — which is that they did it," said Guillermo Sánchez Borbón, a leading opposition newspaper columnist, who has published many details of the killing that point to army involvement.

Dr. Spadafora, a doctor who supported revolutionary groups in Nicaragua and Africa, was a sworn enemy of General Noriega, whom he publicly called a drug dealer and killer several times.

## Talks With Drug Agents

According to Winston Spadafora, the brother of the slain doctor, Dr. Spadafora talked to agents of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration in Costa Rica in the month before his death, detailing evidence he said he had about what he called General Noriega's drug trafficking.

Several United States officials in Washington have charged in recent weeks that Mr. Noriega is a major drug dealer and launderer of drug profits. General Noriega has repeatedly denied the charges, saying they are part of a plot by his enemies to topple him.

After talking with American agents last September, Dr. Spadafora returned to Panama, traveling overland and crossing the frontier by bus on Sept. 13, according to his brother. Three witnesses have sworn that they saw Dr. Spadafora enter the country and that he was then detained by the army near the town of Concepción.

His beheaded and tortured body was found the next morning, just across the border back inside Costa Rica. An autopsy indicated that he had been decapitated while he was still alive, according to his brother.

## Investigation Closed

The Attorney General of Panama closed his investigation into the killing earlier this year, saying he had concluded that Dr. Spadafora was killed inside Costa Rica and that there was no evidence of army involvement.

But the Costa Rican Judicial Police and Attorney General's office reached a different conclusion. They interviewed several witnesses on the border who said two military Jeeps drove across the Panama frontier early in the

morning. When the sun rose, peasants found the decapitated body.

"All indications suggest that Dr. Hugo Spadafora was killed in Panamanian territory and his body thrown into Costa Rican territory," the Costa Rican police report says.

Mr. Sánchez Borbón says four different border-area sources have given him details of the killing. He says the sources told him that Dr. Spadafora was tortured and beheaded by army soldiers at a schoolyard in the village of Corozo, and that the body was then dumped in Costa Rica.

Mr. Sánchez Borbón says his published accounts cannot be confirmed because the witnesses he cites will not talk to another reporter for fear of their lives.

Dr. Spadafora's body had the symbol "F-8" carved into it, according to his brother. The same symbol was etched on another opposition figure, Dr. Mauro Zuñiga, after he was beaten last year by men he says were army soldiers. "F-8" was also written on a window of the airplane that returned President Barletta to Panama last year, before he was dismissed, according to friends of the ex-President.

Diplomats and Panamanian political analysts say they think the "F-8" symbol is linked to an Army unit named "F-7" formed in 1984 to repress political opponents.